

Rights Set Limits

Analyze how the Bill of Rights protects freedoms and restrains government power.

SS.8.CG.2.5 "Analyze how the Bill of Rights guarantees civil rights and liberties to citizens."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each right or protection named in the passage. Circle words or phrases that show how the protection limits government power.

Protections Against Government Power

- ① The Bill of Rights is the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution. It limits government power and protects important freedoms, often called civil liberties. For example, the First Amendment protects freedom of religion, speech, press, peaceful assembly, and petition. A resident may criticize a city policy at a peaceful meeting or ask officials to change it. Government cannot punish the person simply for expressing an opinion, although speech does not protect every action, such as making a true threat.
- ② Other amendments protect people when government investigates or prosecutes them. The Fourth Amendment guards against unreasonable searches and seizures and requires warrants to be supported by probable cause and described specifically. The Fifth Amendment protects a person from being forced to testify against himself or herself and promises due process of law. Due process means government must use fair legal procedures before taking a person's life, liberty, or property. These protections help prevent officials from using power without legal limits.
- ③ Fair treatment in court is also protected. The Sixth Amendment gives an accused person rights including a speedy and public trial, an impartial jury, information about the accusation, and help from a lawyer. The Eighth Amendment bars excessive bail and fines and cruel and unusual punishments. The Bill of Rights originally restricted the federal government. Through later Supreme Court decisions applying the Fourteenth Amendment, many of its protections also limit state and local governments. Courts can review government actions when people claim their rights were violated.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 How does the First Amendment protect a resident who criticizes a city policy at a peaceful meeting?

2 How do the Fourth Amendment's warrant requirements limit government power?

3 Compare the Fifth and Sixth Amendments. How does each one protect a person facing government prosecution?

4 Why are later Supreme Court decisions important for protecting rights from state and local governments?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

A town rule says residents may not hand out flyers criticizing town leaders in a public park, and police may enter any home without a warrant to look for rule breakers. Write exactly five sentences explaining how two Bill of Rights protections apply to this rule and why the town should change it.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each right or protection named in the passage. Circle words or phrases that show how the protection limits government power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the First Amendment protect a resident who criticizes a city policy at a peaceful meeting?	It protects the resident's freedom of speech and peaceful assembly. Government cannot punish the person simply for expressing an opinion.
2	How do the Fourth Amendment's warrant requirements limit government power?	They require warrants to be supported by probable cause and to describe specifically what will be searched or seized, helping prevent unreasonable searches and seizures.
3	Compare the Fifth and Sixth Amendments. How does each one protect a person facing government prosecution?	The Fifth Amendment protects a person from forced self-incrimination and requires due process. The Sixth Amendment protects fair court procedures, including a public and speedy trial, an impartial jury, information about the accusation, and a lawyer.
4	Why are later Supreme Court decisions important for protecting rights from state and local governments?	The decisions apply many Bill of Rights protections to state and local governments through the Fourteenth Amendment, not only to the federal government.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The town rule conflicts with the First Amendment because residents may peacefully share flyers that criticize leaders in a public park. This rule punishes an opinion rather than protecting people from a true threat. It also conflicts with the Fourth Amendment because police cannot enter homes whenever they choose. A warrant must be supported by probable cause and describe the place and items involved. The town should change both parts of the rule because the Bill of Rights limits government power.

Accept accurate explanations that connect a named amendment to a limit on government action. For the open response, accept equivalent five-sentence claims that correctly apply the First and Fourth Amendments and explain the conflict.